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ABSTRACT

Discussed are aspects of the inservice training component of a 1970-71 Paterson, New Jersey, Title III Early Education project which provided an educational intervention program for 120 pre-kindergarten and 120 kindergarten aged culturally disadvantaged children. Noted is the development by the staff of a set of Performance Objectives for areas such as listening, speaking, math, and classification. Described is individual testing of students on the Peabody Picture Vocabulary Test and two staff developed tests: the Identity and Body Parts Test and the Skills Assessment Test. Noted is referral to specialists of children with additional problems such as speech handicaps or hearing loss. Described individually are workshops on the following topics: audiology, methods and materials in perceptual training, language, and the testing program. Also noted are a workshop preceding a symposium on early childhood education, an orientation workshop for first grade teachers, and a workshop on the effects of personality variables on learning. (DB)

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DALE AVENUE SCHOOL

PATERSON, NEW JERSEY

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A TITLE III E.S.E.A. PROJECT
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A New Joyful Experience

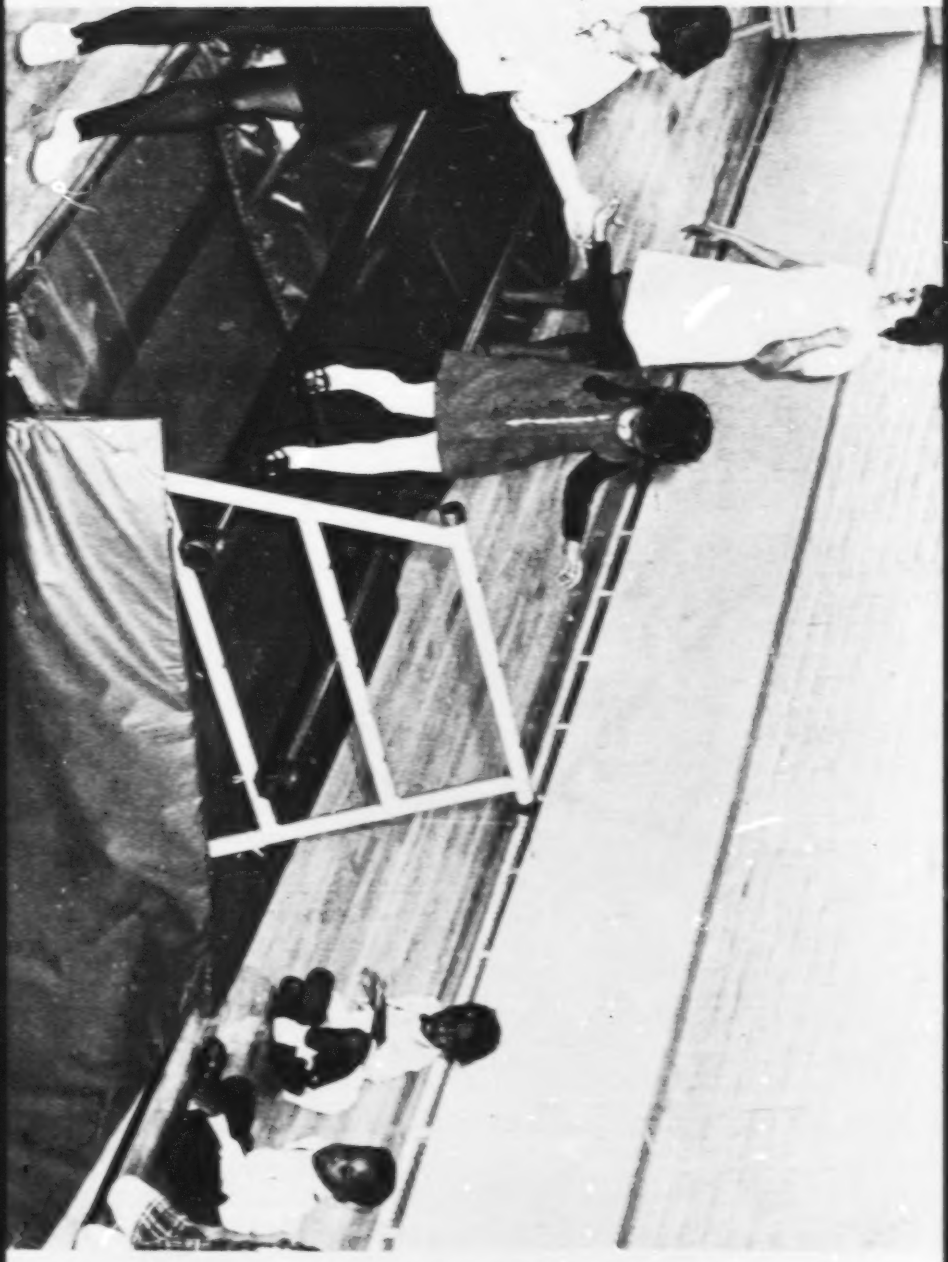
IN-SERVICE TEACHER TRAINING

When the Title III staff first became a part of the Dale Avenue Urban Early Childhood Education Project in October, 1970, they asked themselves many questions including the following:

> Do we value in a young child a sense of joy when he has coped satisfactorily?
>
> Do we believe a child responds with all of himself-with all of the emotional and cognitive factors in his personality being so interwoven as to be inseparable?
>
> Do we believe that teacher training, personality and behavior have a profound effect upon the lives of children?

The Project staff decided that since their answers to all the questions were yes, they had to first assess the needs of each child in the group being studied-the one hundred and twenty Pre-Kindergarten and one hundred and twenty Kindergarten children in the Dale Avenue School. Norms would be interesting as research material but the focus had to be on the biological, psychological, sociological and educational progress of each child and teachers had to be aided to provide each child with meaningful, joyful learning experiences.

Since the classes were small (fifteen children in each Pre-kindergarten class with a teacher and two teacher aides and twenty to twenty-four students in Kindergarten with a teacher and a teacher aide), there was the likelihood



Walking the Rails in Gym

that each child would have the opportunity to build a meaningful relationship with at least one of the adults. In addition, small classes would enable the teachers to give individual attention to students.

With the help of Educational Testing Service of Princeton, New Jersey and with the input of the Director of Pre-Kindergarten, the Principal, the Social Work Coordinator, the Pre-kindergarten and Kindergarten teachers and the Research Director, a set of Performance Objectives for Pre-kindergarten and Kindergarten was prepared by the Title III Project Director in the areas of listening, naming, observing, encoding, speaking, math, and classification. Art, music and physical education specialists at Dale Avenue School prepared Performance Objectives in their respective areas.

In October of 1970 the Director of Pre-kindergarten and the Principal of Dale Avenue School started a specialists' program for training the Pre-kindergarten and Kindergarten teachers. They met every Tuesday morning in October with the physical education, music and art specialists who described how, why and what they would be teaching the children. Beginning in November the specialists worked with the children for the morning session only. The teachers and paraprofessionals attended these classes in order to learn how to teach the same activities to the children who are in the afternoon session.

The Title III Project Director and the Research Director met with the seven teachers involved in the Title III study in October. The testing program and the

Testing a Pre-Kindergarten Child

research design were explained and the Performance Objectives were very carefully reviewed. The teachers received a Performance Objective Record for each child involved in the study.

The Performance Objective Record is a unique device which lists specific skills to be mastered. The skills are compatible with the developmental sequence of four and five year olds as was illustrated by empirical testing in the pilot program in the 1969-70 school year. The Performance Objectives not only provide an evaluation instrument, but they also structure the material presented in the Pre-kindergarten and Kindergarten classroom.

The project children were then individually tested on three additional tests- one standardized and two staff-made tests. From the Peabody Picture Vocabulary Test, the testers noted how much receptive language each child had, the kinds of words to which he gave incorrect responses, whether he exhibited problems in auditory and visual perception, acuity, hyperactivity, negativism, disinhibition, poor eye-hand coordination, distractability or short attention span.

From the Identity and Body Parts Test, the testers noted whether the child had any knowledge about himself such as name, age, address, the labels for the parts of his body, etc.

From the staff-made Skill Assessment Test, the testers noted cognitive inefficiencies, motor, language, and articulation. Possible hearing disorders or difficulties were also identified.

Each child's responses were noted next to the appropriate item on the test sheet. The tests were meant to be diagnostic and the feedback on all three tests was quickly compiled and returned to the teachers with a prescription for remediation.

If the child had a speech or language problem he was referred to the speech therapist. She or one of the student therapists from William Paterson College (who were recruited by the Title III Project Director and Research Director), worked individually or in small groups once or twice a week with each child referred. Appropriate activities were suggested to the teacher so that she or her aide could follow through with the therapist's program. When emotional disabilities were noted, the child was referred to the school psychologist who prescribed a plan of action for the teacher and aide to follow.

If a hearing loss was suspected the child was referred to the staff audiologist who further tested the child and referred him to the school doctor, if this was deemed necessary. If it was a temporary condition due to upper respiratory infection, she instructed the teacher how to work with the child during this period. If speech, reading or auditory training became necessary, the speech therapist provided this service.

If a physical impairment was suspected, the child was referred to the nurse or doctor and the teacher was alerted if she needed to follow any particular regimen with the child.

The teachers were appreciative of the testing feedback that they received. Even though they were with the children every day, the child's remarks that were noted by the tester, the responses to various questions and the tester's reactions gave them additional information and insight into each of their children. The teachers were also pleased because so much of this test information could be listed on the children's Performance Objective Record. This was not only a time-saving factor for the teachers, but it helped them to determine which skill objective each child could next perform in the developmental skill sequence.

It became apparent at this time that some of the teachers needed resource material and suggested activities for teaching particular skills. Most of the teachers were gratified that there was flexibility in the program that enabled them to use their own creativity. Whenever it was requested the Title III Project Director and Research Director provided suggestions or resource material to teach particular skills. A sizeable research library on Early Childhood Education was also made available to the teachers by the Pre-kindergarten Director.

The teachers valued any information that helped them to work with the individual needs of their children. The teachers reported that they were very busy but that they did not mind because they could see the results, and the individual successes more than made up for the extra time spent in preparation.

Several Training Workshops were held during the year in order to provide answers to the questions on how to work with children with specific learning problems or inefficiencies. Other workshops gave background material in pertinent areas that some of the teachers and many of the paraprofessionals had not previously experienced.

Besides the Orientation Workshop and the Instructional Television Workshop discussed in our first bulletin, seven other workshops were presented to the teachers and paraprofessionals in the project and to other invited professionals and paraprofessionals.

AUDIOLOGY WORKSHOP

Mrs. Gilda Walsh, the staff Audiologist and an instructor at William Paterson College, presented an Audiology Workshop on November 26, 1970.

The purpose of this workshop was to outline the objectives and procedures of a Hearing Conservation Program. Mrs. Walsh explained that the program would include an initial and second screening of hearing for every child in the Pre-

Audiology Workshop

kindergarten and Kindergarten because a thorough screening program should be conducted during the child's early years in order to identify those individuals who may have hearing problems so that they may be referred as soon as possible for the proper medical treatment and remedial educational procedures.

A complete hearing evaluation will be scheduled for those children who do not meet the criteria established for the screening test. This complete evaluation will be conducted when the new audiometric equipment is installed at the Dale Avenue School.

Teachers and teacher-aides were also made aware of thephysical and behavioral signs usually displayed by children with hearing difficulty so that referrals for audiometric testing could be facilitated.

It was also explained that there are different kinds of hearing losses and that the amplification of sound does not necessarily mean that the hearing-impaired individual would then be able to understand speech.

At the conclusion of the workshop, all participants were invited by the audiologist to have their hearing tested so that they each might become more familiar with audiometric tests and testing procedures which could then be explained to their students.

METHODS AND MATERIALS IN PERCEPTUAL TRAINING

On February 11th, Title III presented Dr. Phoebe Lazarus as guest lecturer. Dr. Lazarus, whose topic was "Methods and Materials in Perceptual Training", is presently Learning Disabilities Supervisor of Programs of the Nassau County, New York, Board of Cooperative Educational Services. Dr. Lazarus, in addition to having held the position of Coordinator of the Program in Learning Disabilities at Teacher's College, Columbia University, also served as an advisor to the U.S. Office of Education, Bureau of Handicapped. She is currently consultant to the Pathfinder School and, in this capacity, works with three, four and five-year old children, as well as with the in-service training of teachers and the development of curriculum. Dr. Lazarus was also Director of Research in the New York State Extended Readiness Program.

Approximately twenty-five teachers from all grades at Dale Avenue School and the First Baptist Church were present to observe Dr. Lazarus as she demonstrated and explained reasons why particular games and toys are used in training youngsters with perceptual problems. Paramount in Dr. Lazarus' discussion was her presentation of materials to aid the teachers in teaching visual and auditory skills to the reluctant learners usually present in most classes today. These children have been described as possessing symptoms of "The Failure Syndrome". Some of the symptoms Dr. Lazarus spoke of during the workshop were disorganization, restlessness,

Perceptual Training

impulsiveness, difficulties in motor skills (hand-eye coordination), extreme dependency and attention disorders.

Dr. Lazarus further pointed out that a child today learns much like a computor, in that everything in the environment which helps him grow is "Input Material". This is similar to the data which is fed into a computor. "A child", said Dr. Lazarus, "processes information, recognizes it, compares it to past experiences, and stores the information for further utilization."

Dr. Lazarus stressed that teachers are becoming researchers in their own classrooms, in that observation skills and the ability to analyze children is helping to create new methods in teaching a child with difficulties. The most ordinary materials, such as play school blocks, can be used to create test problems for the child, such as matching shapes and colors. Dr. Lazarus explained that these kinds of matching exercises attain differnet levels of problem solving.

Dr. Lazarus summarized the workshop by pointing out that teachers must instruct in the areas of mastery of self or behavior, body and physical skills, auditory processing (listening), and visual processing or looking skills.

LANGUAGE WORKSHOP

On February 23rd, Mrs. Rita Gavzy, Title III Research Director, previously the Speech Therapist at Dale Avenue School, conducted a Language Workshop.

Discussed in this workshop was the importance of spontaneous language and some suggestions for fostering it; how to develop inner, receptive and expressive language; how to develop listening skills, developmental listing of articulation and language activities; and suggestions for speech patterning and vocabulary building.

The teacher's role was described in addition to the effect of enthusiasm, attitude and personality on the child's determination to happily and willingly listen to what is said to him or asked of him. The teachers were also questioned as to whether they were audile (learning best by listening), visile (learning best by what they saw), or motile (learning best by writing down what they heard). Some of the teachers indicated that they were more visile. Others thought they were primarily audile. The majority thought that they were a combination. Similarily, it was pointed out that children also learned best in different ways- just as their teachers did and that one mode of teaching a particular skill might work for one child but an entirely different method might be needed to teach the same skill to another child.

Language Workshop

The importance of small group activities was stressed to the paraprofessionals in the morning and the teachers who attended in the afternoon.

WORKSHOP ON TITLE III TESTING PROGRAM

On March 22nd, Dr. Francis Tomedy, Psychology Professor at William Paterson College, spoke to the paraprofessionals and teachers on the rationale for the Peabody Picture Vocabulary Test and the Staff-Made Tests in the Title III Project study.

Following an overview on testing in general, Dr. Tomedy explained that the Peabody Test is in general agreement with Wechsler and Stanford Binet. Both of these tests take much longer to administer than the Peabody which involves fifteen minutes for administering and scoring. Moreover, the Wechsler and Stanford Binet tests require administration by trained psychologists.

It was further explained that the Peabody Picture Vocabulary Test is an intelligence test. It indicates how children measure with in the group and it also indicates where the individual child is functioning. The pre-test helps to select the child who has additional and special needs. The post-test shows a measure of progress.

It was made clear that the staff-made Skill Assessment Test is not predictive nor is it designed as a survey. It is designed as an individual diagnostic test and indicates what a child can or cannot do. The teacher having noted what the child can or cannot do then decides what remedial measures, if any, are necessary.

Dr. Tomedy stated that the staff-made Identity and Body Parts Test was quite important because it stressed labeling of body parts. He indicated that the more labels a child has the better he is able to think, and the more precise the words a child can use the more advanced his thinking will be.

WORKSHOP ON SYMPOSIUM

During the week beginning February 8th the Project Director and Research Director met individually with the Pre-kindergarten teachers to discuss the Symposium on Early Childhood Education held at Johns Hopkins University in Baltimore, and how it applied to the program in the individual Dale Avenue Pre-kindergarten classes as noted when they were monitored.

ORIENTATION WORKSHOP FOR FIRST GRADE TEACHERS

On March 24th the Project Director and Research Director met with the first grade teachers to inform them of their role in the Title III Project during the 1971-72 school year. They reviewed the Pre-kindergarten and Kindergarten Performance Objectives and discussed all aspects of the project.

Since several of the workshops were video-taped on the closed circuit television system at Dale Avenue, teachers, paraprofessionals and personnel from other schools will be able to review the important areas covered in them.

WORKSHOP ON PERSONALITY VARIABLES AND HOW THEY AFFECT LEARNING

On May 6th, Dr. Marion Blank of Albert Einstein College of Medicine, spoke to a group of 60 educators at Dale Avenue School. Her topic, "The Role of Personality Variables in Cognitive Programs", highlighted the hyperactive and withdrawn child whose personality problems make it difficult for them to deal with the learning situation.

Dr. Blank explained that personality factors are often the defenses of the"poorly functioning child" and that this child often does not operate well in cognitive skill areas. Dr. Blank further feels that for these children opportunity to learn is not enough. The teacher must provide structure.

Dr. Blank's presentation was attended by Dale Avenue staff and Dale mothers who tutor within the school. Seventeen members of Paterson Special Services and representatives from other Paterson schools also attended the program. Five Head Start teachers, a representative from Community Day Care Centers and staff members from Bayonne, Oakland, and Jefferson Township schools also participated in the workshop.

Ann L. Butler, who has compiled current research on Early Childhood Education reports that there are three broad classes of goals that motivate the child's learning of academic skills. The first is a desire for praise and recognition by others including parents and teachers. These goals are primary during preschool and early school years. A second class of motives begins at four and five and involves the child's desire to increase his perceived similarity to a model. If the model is skilled at academic tasks and acts as if he valued such mastery, the child will be motivated to increase his academic talents. A third class involves the desire for competence and self-worth.

Praise, intellectual models and desire for self-worth are also motivating factors for teachers.